

September 5, 2007

Gail Kimbell, Chief
USDA Forest Service
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-0003

Dear Chief Kimbell,

I write in follow-up to my July 6, 2007 letter regarding Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use policies within the Ouachita National Forest system in Oklahoma.

First, I want to thank you and your staff for the prompt response I received to my previous letter. As you probably know, I met with forest management personnel in August and very much appreciate the conversation we had that afternoon.

Second, while touring Le Flore County that same day, several residents expressed hope that an advisory committee created by the "Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation and Wilderness Area Act, PL 100-149," could be reconstituted. In addition to the concerns surrounding OHV use policies, in the long term, I believe such an advisory committee would serve your agency, the residents of the area, and all taxpayers well.

I am not entirely clear on the status of the committee. Because it was authorized pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, I am assuming the authority for the committee has lapsed. However, I am requesting any background you can provide on the committee and its activities. I am hopeful the committee, or an equivalent body, can be reconstituted in the near future. Any information you can provide will be helpful.

Again, I very much appreciate the time your staff took in meeting with me last month, and I look forward to working with you to ensure that local residents are given a more formal opportunity to participate in the future of Ouachita National Forest.

Sincerely,

Tom A. Coburn, MD
United States Senate